

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7308

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV AR

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR HILL'S CALL ON BRIGADIER GENERAL DIAZ

BESSONE, PLANNING MINISTER, GOA

CIA FOR DIRECTOR BUSH

DIA FOR GEN. WILSON

STATE FOR AMB SHLANDEMAN

1. AT THE TIME OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GENERAL DIAZ BESSONE WOULD HEAD THE NEW PLANNING MINISTRY, AND BASED UPON PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE OF DAO OFFICERS WITH THE GENERAL, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO CALL ON HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF MY IMMINENT DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S. AS THE DEPARTMENT WELL KNOWN, CREATING A MINISTRY WITH SUCH AN OPEN MANDATE COULD LEAD TO THE UNDERCUTTING AND DESTRUCTION OF THE MARTINEZ DE HOZ ECONOMIC PLAN AND COULD LEAD TO THE OVERTHROW OF VIDELA IF THE "DUROS" AND MODERATES SHOULD HAVE A FALLING OUT. MUCH TO OUR SURPRISE, WITH LESS THAN TWO DAYS NOTICE, THE AUDIENCE WAS GRANTED. I BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT WILL AGREE THAT WHAT THE GENERAL HAD TO SAY ABOUT HIS VIEW OF THE FUTURE ROLE OF ARGENTINA WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. THIS GENERAL IS A TOUGH, DEDICATED ANTI-COMMUNIST WITH AN EVANGELICAL FERVOR UNEQUALLED BY ANY MILITARY OFFICER THAT I HAVE MET IN FIVE POSTS. IF DIAZ BESSONE HAS BROAD
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SUPPORT FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY, HE WOULD BE THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE

TO REPLACE VIDELA. THE DETAILS OF OUR CONVERSATION FOLLOW.

2. AT 1100 HOURS ON 5 NOVEMBER THE AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED BY DCM CHAPLIN, POLITICAL COUNSELOR SMITH, AND DEFENSE ATTACHE COLONEL COUGHLIN, CALLED ON GENERAL RAMON DIAZ BESSONE, HEAD OF THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED PLANNING MINISTRY. THE GROUP WAS MET BY THE GENERAL AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER, RETIRED ARMY COLONEL DURET, (AND USHERED INTO A LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR THE MEETING TO INCLUDE PLACE CARDS TO INDICATE THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT.) INITIAL AMENITIES WERE EXCHANGED, AND AFTER ABOUT TEN MINUTES COLONEL DURET SUGGESTED SOMEWHAT ABRUPTLY THAT MR. CHAPLIN AND MR. SMITH ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE ADJOINING OFFICE WHERE HE WOULD GIVE THEM AN ORIENTATION ON THE NEW MINISTRY. (SEE PARAGRAPH 9 FOR SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH COLONEL DURET.)

3. WHEN THE OTHERS DEPARTED, THE GENERAL SUGGESTED THAT, TO SET THE STAGE FOR THE DISCUSSION, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO EXPLAIN HIS VIEW OF THE WORLD AND OF ARGENTINA. FIRST, HE BELIEVES THAT THE WORLD IS GOING THROUGH A NEW ERA IN WHICH THE RED STAIN OF MARXISM IS EXPANDING AND IN WHICH THE COMMUNISTS ARE EXTENDING THEIR INFLUENCE WHEREVER THEY CAN AND AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. "WHY", HE ASKED, "AM I OPPOSED TO MARXISM?" IN ANSWER TO HIS OWN QUESTION HE EXPLAINED THAT MARXISM IS AN ENTIRELY ALIEN PHILOSOPHY FOR ARGENTINA, WHOSE CULTURE AND VALUES ARE DERIVED FROM THE WESTERN WORLD. THE RELIGIOUS BASE OF ARGENTINA STEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT WHICH ORIGINATED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND REACHED ITS ZENITH IN WESTERN EUROPE. ARGENTINE PHILOSOPHY IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEKS AND WAS ALSO TRANSMITTED BY WAY OF WESTERN EUROPE. ARGENTINE LAW IS ALSO INHERITED FROM WESTERN EUROPE AND ITS ROOTS ARE FOUND IN ANCIENT ROME. THUS, HE CONTINUED, ARGENTINE VALUES ARE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE TO MARXIST VALUES. WHILE THE ARGENTINE CULTURE IS BASED ON CHRISTIANITY, TRUE MARXISTS ARE ATHEISTS; ADDITIONALLY, ARGENTINE CULTURE CONSIDERS AS UPPERMOST THE VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, WHILE IN A MARXIST SOCIETY THE INDIVIDUAL IS SUBORDINATED TO THE COLLECTIVE CONCEPT. THE WESTERN WORLD, THANKS TO ITS CHRISTIAN RELIGION, PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH AND SOUND LEGAL HERITAGE, HAS PROVIDED FERTILE GROUND FOR THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF SCIENCE.

4. THE GENERAL THEM OBSERVED THAT WITHIN THE WESTERN WORLD THE
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NORTHERN PEOPLES HAVE OBVIOUSLY PROGRESSED MUCH MORE RAPIDLY THAN THOSE OF EITHER SOUTHERN EUROPE OR LATIN AMERICA. THIS HORIZONTAL DIVISION OF WESTERN PEOPLES, HE CONCLUDED, IS PRIMARILY DUE TO THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION IN THE SOUTH AS OPPOSED TO PROTESTANTISM IN THE NORTH. UNFORTUNATELY, CATHOLICS, IN THEIR CONVICTION THAT A BETTER LIFE WILL BE OBTAINED IN THE HEREAFTER, HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO SETTLE FOR VERY LITTLE ON EARTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PROTESTANT APPROACH HAS BEEN THAT ONE'S NICHE IN THE

HEREAFTER DEPENDS TO A GREAT DEGREE ON HOW HARD ONE WORKS AND HOW MUCH ONE ACCOMPLISHES DURING HIS LIFE. THIS BASIC APPROACH TO LIFE AND TO THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK CANNOT BE CHANGED RAPIDLY, ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL, BUT EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO INSTILL THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK AND ACCOMPLISHMENT.

5. THE GENERAL THEN TURNED TO THE CURRENT SITUATION AND POINTED OUT THAT ARGENTINA, AND OTHER SOUTHERN COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHILE, URUGUAY AND BRAZIL WERE THE TARGETS OF AN INSIDIOUS ATTACK BY THE COMMUNISTS EMANATING PRIMARILY FROM WESTERN EUROPE, BUT ALSO FROM THE U.S. THE ATTACK IS BEING CONDUCTED THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA, MUCH OF WHICH THE MARXISTS CONTROL. FACED WITH THIS COMMON THREAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT ARGENTINA AND HER NEIGHBORS COOPERATE AND COLLABORATE IF THEY ARE TO SURVIVE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT ARGENTINA HAS ESTABLISHED AS ONE OF ITS FIRST FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES THE IMPROVEMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. RELATIONS WITH OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS ARE VERY IMPORTANT, AS WELL AS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. SINCE ARGENTINA'S DESTINY IS WITH THE WEST, GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD, ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT ARGENTINA WILL ASK FOR HELP. THE ARGENTINES CAN AND WILL SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS WITH THEIR HARD WORK, SWEAT, AND DEDICATION. THEN PLACING HIS HAND ON HIS CHEST AND SAYING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING FROM THE HEART, HE DECLARED THAT THE ONLY THING ARGENTINA ASKS IS THAT THE U.S. TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT ARGENTINA IS FIGHTING TO PRESERVE THE SAME VALUES AND WAY OF LIFE THAT THE UNITED STATES HOLDS DEAR. FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY CANNOT COEXIST WITH COMMUNISM, HE ADDED. THEN, TO SUM UP, THE MINISTER POSED THE QUESTION: "WHAT IS IT THAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?" HIS ANSWER WAS THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO FORM A NEW REPUBLIC BASED ON WESTERN CULTURE VALUES IN WHICH THERE IS LIBERTY AND JUSTICE AND IN WHICH THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS ARE GUARANTEED AND PROTECTED. HE STRESSED THAT THEY DID NOT WANT A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND THAT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC WHICH THEY WERE SEEKING WOULD BE A DEMOCRATIC ONE. OF COURSE, ARGENTINA MUST ACHIEVE INTERNAL PEACE BEFORE THE NEW REPUBLIC CAN BE REALIZED AND THE MILITARY WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE TO GOVERN WHILE FIGHTING SUBVERSION.

6. AFTER LEAVING THE ROOM BRIEFLY TO GET MORE CIGARETTES, THE GENERAL LAUNCHED INTO AN EXPLANATION OF THE ROLE OF THE NEW PLANNING MINISTRY. HE STRESSED THAT THE MINISTRY IN NO WAY WAS INTENDED TO USURP PLANNING FUNCTIONS OR STIFLE INITIATIVE. ON THE CONTRARY, ALL MINISTRIES WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAN IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS WITH ONLY VERY GENERAL GUIDELINES FROM HIS MINISTRY. THE PLANNING MINISTRY WOULD COORDINATE THE PLANS THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING CYCLE, HOWEVER, TO ENSURE THAT THE RESOURCES OF THE GOVERNMENT WERE BEING USED EFFICIENTLY TO ACHIEVE COMMON AND PRIORITY GOALS AND TO MAKE SURE THAT NONE OF THE MINISTRIES

GO OFF ON TANGENTS. HE COMPARED THE GUIDANCE WHICH HIS MINISTRY WOULD PROVIDE TO THE RULES OF A FOOTBALL GAME. THE OTHER MINISTRIES WILL HAVE A GREAT DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR PLANNING BUT WILL BE REQUIRED TO STAY WITHIN THE GENERAL PARAMETERS DETERMINED BY THE PLANNING MINISTRY. IT IS OBVIOUS, HE ADDED, THAT EACH MINISTRY CANNOT MAKE ITS OWN RULES. THE NEW REPUBLIC WHICH THE GOA IS SEEKING MUST ACHIEVE A DELICATE BALANCE OF LIBERTY AND ORDER. "LIBERTY WITHOUT ORDER IS CHAOS, WHILE ORDER WITHOUT LIBERTY IS DICTATORSHIP", HE CONCLUDED.

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